

12 February 1973

Here are some of my thoughts on the paper entitled, "The Agency and the Young Employee" that was written by a junior Agency employee. Overall, I found it to be loaded with clichés and generalizations that are not supported by facts. I take issue with most of the claims the author makes about today's youth.

I will give my opinion on only some of the claims presented in the paper. But I would be happy to discuss the contents of the entire paper with you at any time. Below are a few specific areas where I feel the author has been inaccurate in his judgements.

A. The author states that "the young employee craves feedback" and wants honesty and forthrightness. I feel that most people want feedback on their job performance. The desire to receive praise and to know how you did on a particular task is human and not a sign of being young. I feel that most people want to be treated with respect, forthrightness, and honesty. The author seems to think the young have a monopoly on these desires.

B. The author believes that the values and attitudes of the young are at odds with older generations. Yet, according to a study conducted for CBS News in 1969 by

Daniel Yankelovich, Inc. the attitudes of youth aged 17-23 (born between 1946 and 1952) compare favorably with the attitudes held by their parents. The following are some of the responses to questions concerning traditional values and attitudes.

	TOTAL YOUTH	TOTAL PARENTS	CPYRGH T
A. Hard work will always pay off.			
Believe in	74%	83%	
Do not believe in	26	17	
B. Depending on how much strength and character a person has, he can pretty well control what happens to him.			
Believe in	74	74	
Do not believe in	26	24	
C. Belonging to some organized religion is important in a person's life.			
Believe in	66	89	
Do not believe in	34	11	
D. Competition encourages excellence.			
Believe in	80	89	
Do not believe in	20	9	
E. Society needs some legally based authority in order to prevent chaos			
Believe in	94	96	
Do not believe in	6	3	
F. Compromise is essential for progress.			
Believe in	87	84	
Do not believe in	13	14	

Which of the following views of American society and American life reflect your own feelings?

	TOTAL YOUTH	TOTAL PARENTS	CPYRGH T
The American way of life is superior to that of any other country.	30%	28%	
There are serious flaws in our society today, but the system is flexible enough to solve them.	64	61	
The American system is not flexible enough; radical change is needed.	12	9	

C. The author claims that the youth of today are mobile. This is probably true. But Americans as a whole are a mobile people. According to one expert,* "the average American moves about fourteen times in his lifetime." Some 40 million Americans--one fifth of our population--change their addresses at least once each year. According to Newsweek Magazine, about 30% of its subscribers move each year. The author also claims that this mobility means that the young employee will not hesitate to quit the Agency if he is dissatisfied. I'm not sure if you can make a valid comparison between mobility and the Agency's attrition rate. But I do know that the Agency's attrition rate has not reflected any significant change in resignations among young employees.

D. The author states that the typical young employee is not motivated by money and that the meaning and depth of the young employee's work are his primary motivators. I agree that job satisfaction is one of the most important motivators, but I would not say that this is peculiar only to the young. What motivates workers has been the subject of study throughout this century. Studies dating back to the 1920's and 1930's (the Hawthorn Studies) indicate that workers are more motivated by social aspects of their jobs than by the physical aspects. The following words were spoken in 1950 by a social scientist who was 52 years old:

People at work are not so different from people in other aspects of life.... They like to feel important and to have their work recognized as important. Although they are interested in the size of their pay envelopes, this is not a matter of their first concern. Sometimes they are more interested in having their pay reflect accurately the relative social importance to them of the different jobs they do....*

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Almost every day you can find an article in some magazine or newspaper concerning employee motivation and efforts to put meaning and satisfaction into an employee's job. For example, the front page of The N.Y. Times on 5 February had an article on how companies were trying to increase worker motivation by giving them more responsibility and challenge in their jobs. The ages of the workers were not mentioned in the articles, but I think it would be safe to assume

* F. J. Roethlisberger, from a speech entitled "The Human

that the workers were of all ages. The companies mentioned were General Foods, American Telephone and Telegraph, Corning Glass, and General Electric. The whole movement toward job enrichment is not directed only toward the young, but toward all age groups. It has been caused by the reaction to industrialization and mass production and not by the protests of the young.

E. The author seems to be particularly critical about not getting an immediate opportunity to fill a responsible position in the Agency. He wants a chance to hang himself if his judgements and decisions are wrong and to savor his success when he proves right. I feel that organizations have a right to test an employee's ability to do a job before giving him larger responsibilities. In fact, in the intelligence business the Agency has the obligation to be sure about an employee's judgement and reasoning ability; he may be hanging more than himself if his judgements are wrong. The previously mentioned Yankelovich study also polled youth on their attitudes toward work. The results do not support the author's view.

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TOTAL
YOUTH

The power and authority of the "boss" in a work situation	
Accept easily	67%
Accept reluctantly	29%
Reject outright	4

CPYRGHT

TOTAL
YOUTH

Having little decision-making
power in the first few years
of a job

Accept easily	46%
Accept reluctantly	39
Reject outright	13

F. The author warns the Agency that it can "anticipate close scrutiny by the young employee" even to the point of questioning the "basic purposes of intelligence work." The author is being overly presumptuous if he thinks that the Agency's mission and the entire role of intelligence have not been the topic of discussion and re-examination since 1947. The author should read some of the history surrounding the creation of the Agency. I think he would be surprised with the concern that was expressed over creating a national intelligence organization. Since 1947, the role of intelligence in the formulation of our foreign policy has been examined and reevaluated frequently. The Agency responds to the changing world situation and shifting national requirements. I think we will be seeing a reorientation of priorities in intelligence work but this will not be because of a reaction of the close scrutiny by a few of today's youth but rather a rational response to national security needs and changing priorities.

G. The author believes that the young do not believe in the use of military force to solve international differences. He claims that the young were united against the war in Vietnam. A Gallup Poll released in April 1968 reported that 54 percent of the college students polled said that the US should not stop bombing North Vietnam and only 42 percent said that we should. Also the youth vote in the last election was split nearly evenly between Nixon and McGovern, even though the President ordered more bombs dropped on North Vietnam than did President Johnson.

H. The author states that "in the eyes of the young" the Democratic Convention in 1968 was "a Chicago police riot." Yet, The Gallup Poll released on 17 September 1968 reported that 47 percent of young adults (aged 21-29) approved of the way the Chicago Police handled the demonstrations and only 41 percent disapproved.

I. The author criticizes the Agency's supervisors because they don't understand "where the young employee is at." The Agency does have managerial problems. But this is not because our managers do not relate to the young employee. It is because many Agency managers do not know how to manage. They are managing older employees just as poorly as the younger employees. It has very little to do with the age groups they are managing. Many of our

managers are simply ignorant of basic managerial techniques and responsibilities. It is not a conspiracy by supervisors against the young employee.

The author's tone seems to have a sense of urgency and impatience to it. I suppose this is a characteristic of the young. But I don't think that the youth of today are any more impatient than their parents were when they were young. I sympathize with many of the author's views, but these views are held by only a minority of the young. The author is deceiving himself if he thinks that all youth hold the same political and social views and that these views are different from the rest of American society. In summary, I found the paper shallow, poorly thought out and immature.

The attached cartoon from the February issue of the New Yorker depicts two middle-aged workers--one an executive, one an employee. Both have the same disgruntled expressions. Perhaps it would be more pertinent to my paper if the employee seeking advice were a 23 year old--or better yet, the executive be a 23 year old and the employee be middle-aged.

NOTE: The author of this paper is a 29 year old former CT, now GS-09. Holds a BA and working on MA at night. Had tour of duty with U.S. Army. Is not a Support careerist.

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